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RUEHTN/AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN IMMEDIATE 7621-7622
INFO RUESBKC/ATO ASIA IMMEDIATE 1869-1870

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 STATE 055542

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SUBJECT: TRAVEL WARNING - NEPAL

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¶1. The Department of State warns U.S. citizens of the risks of traveling to Nepal and urges caution when traveling in country. The Department of State remains concerned about the security situation in Nepal and urges American citizens to obtain updated security information before they travel and to be prepared to change their plans on short notice. This replaces the Travel Warning for Nepal dated November 21, 2008 and updates safety and security information.

¶2. Political violence remains a problem in Nepal. The Young Communist League (YCL), a Maoist Party subgroup, continues to engage in extortion, abuse, and threats of violence, particularly in rural areas. Youth groups from the other two main political parties, the Nepali Congress (NC) and the United Marxist-Leninist Party (UML), have also formed and clashes continue among these political rivals. Violent actions by multiple armed splinter groups in the Terai region along the southern border with India remain a significant concern.

¶3. Protests, demonstrations and disruptions frequently occur. The May 4, 2009 resignation of the Prime Minister and the resulting caretaker government has created an environment of increased political instability and the potential for demonstrations to be called without advance notice. During demonstrations, protestors have used violence, including damaging vehicles, throwing rocks, and burning tires to block traffic. Given the nature, intensity, and unpredictability of disturbances, American citizens are urged to exercise special caution during

times when demonstrations are announced, avoid areas where demonstrations are occurring or crowds are forming, avoid road travel, and maintain a low profile. Curfews can be announced with little or no advance notice.

American citizens are urged to consult media sources and to register with the Embassy (see instructions below) for current security information.

¶4. Crime in the Kathmandu Valley, including violent crime and harassment of women, continues to rise. Police resources to combat such crime are limited. Police have reported a number of robberies by armed gangs, sometimes resulting in injury to the victims. Petty theft and muggings occur in popular tourist areas such as Pokhara and the Thamel area of Kathmandu. Visitors to Nepal should practice good personal security when moving about, especially at night, and avoid walking alone after dark, carrying large sums of cash, or wearing expensive jewelry. In several reported incidents tourists have had their belongings stolen from their rooms while they were asleep. There has been an increase in the number of fraudulent schemes perpetrated against tourists. These schemes involve requesting the traveler's assistance in establishing shipping routes, or business contacts with the United States or other countries, involving jewelry, antiquities, or carpets, promising huge returns. Solo trekkers have been robbed by small groups of young men, even on some popular trails. There have been reports of groups, primarily the Maoist Young Communist League, stopping foreign tourists along some popular trekking routes to extort money as donations to a political party, or toll for passage. Political parties or community groups frequently call strikes, or bandhs, and have threatened physical violence to Nepalis and non-Nepalis alike for violating these strikes.

¶5. Travel via road in areas outside of the Kathmandu Valley is hazardous due to erratic drivers and frequent road accidents. Public transportation, such as

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microbuses and tuk tuks, should be avoided because they are often overfilled, driven unsafely, and mechanically unsound. American citizens should use taxis with meters or negotiate a price with the taxi driver before starting a trip.

¶6. Most U.S. official travel outside the Kathmandu Valley, including by air, requires specific clearance by the U.S. Embassy's Regional Security Officer. As a result, The U.S. Embassy's ability to provide emergency assistance to U.S. citizens may be limited. Active duty U.S. military and Department of Defense contractors must obtain U.S. Embassy clearance in advance for official and personal travel to Nepal.

¶7. The U.S. Government's designation of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) as a "Specially Designated Global Terrorist" organization under Executive Order 13224 and its inclusion on the "Terrorist Exclusion List" pursuant to the Immigration and Nationality Act remain in effect. These two designations make Maoists excludable from entry into the United States without a waiver and bar U.S. citizens from transactions such as contribution of funds, goods, or services to, or for the benefit of, the Maoists.

¶8. For additional information, please refer to "A Safe Trip Abroad" found at <http://travel.state.gov>. Americans living or traveling in Nepal are encouraged to register with the U.S. Embassy through the State Department's travel registration website

<https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs> . The Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy in Kathmandu is located at Maharajgunj. The telephone number is 977-1-4007200, 4007201. The number for after-hours emergencies is 977-1-4007266, 4007269. The fax number is 977-1-

¶4007281. The Consulate's e-mail address is consktm@state.gov and its Internet web page is <http://nepal.usembassy.gov>. U.S. citizens should also consult the Department of State's latest Country Specific

Information for Nepal and the Worldwide Caution,
available at <http://travel.state.gov>. Up-to-date
information on security can also be obtained by calling
1-888-407-4747 toll free in the United States and Canada
or, for callers outside the United States and Canada, a
regular toll line at 1-202-501-4444. These numbers are
available from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern time,
Monday through Friday (except U.S. federal holidays).

MINIMIZE CONSIDERED

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